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## Foreword

Antibiotic resistance has resulted in a continuous need for new therapeutic alternatives. However, we see very few new anti-infective drugs. The reason for this is the increasing cost of development; the economic return is so limited that some pharmaceutical companies have decided to leave the field of infectious diseases. The ultimate threat is that we may find ourselves in a position where patients cannot be treated because effective drugs are not available.

The European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases believes that action must be taken now, to address this problem. Accordingly, a symposium entitled 'Influence of the regulatory environment on antimicrobial resistance' was organized at the 14th ECCMID in

Prague in May of this year, and a second symposium entitled 'Antimicrobial therapy in the 21st century' was held in Stockholm the following month, a report of which was published in the last edition of the *ESCMID News* (No. 3, 2004, <http://www.escmid.org>). A position paper entitled 'Lack of development of new antimicrobial drugs: a potential serious threat to public health' is currently in press.

This issue constitutes an important contribution to the ongoing discussion of the current situation.

*Carl.Erik Nord*  
Supplements Editor